

Phenomenological Study of Parents' Role in Caring for Children's Dental and Oral Health at Jelegong Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

Dental and oral health is very influential for children's lives in school-age children, it is a very serious thing to think about because several dental health problems in children are still a problem around the world. Poor dental care can cause problems with teeth and mouth such as canker sores, bad breath, gingivitis and tooth caries. Parents have a major role in educating, guiding, and caring because parents are closest to their children as an important factor in preventing tooth and mouth decay. Riskesdes 2018 reported the prevalence of health disorders of damaged teeth/caries/dirty teeth in children 80-90%, children aged 3-4 years as much as 81.1%, ages 5-9 years as much as 92.6% and ages 10-14 as much as 73.4%. This study aims to describe the understanding of the role of parents about children's dental and oral health at SDN Jelegong. The research method uses a phenomenological qualitative research design with 6 participants selected purposively. Data collection was carried out in November to December 2024 through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Documentation using an iPhone 7+ camera and a Redmi 12 android voice recorder. The results of the research were obtained in 3 themes including: 1) Teaching children's dental and oral care, 2) Children's dental and oral health knowledge, 3) Obstacles in caring for children's dental and oral health. It is hoped that parents should be able to improve their role well in maintaining dental and oral health in school-age children because at that age children need the role of parents so that they do not experience problems with teeth, one of which is dental caries.

INTRODUCTION

Parents have the main role in educating, guiding and nurturing because parents are closest to children as an important factor in preventing oral damage. Healthy teeth and mouth are white, no damage and free of plaque. Oral health in school-age children is a very serious matter to think about because some dental health problems in children are still a problem throughout the world. Poor dental care can cause problems with teeth and mouth such as mouth ulcers, bad breath, gingivitis, and the most common chronic disease in school-age children dental caries (Anak et al., 2023). However, the role of parents in maintaining oral health is often neglected, leading to significant consequences such as tooth decay and other diseases. Studies have emphasized the importance of early dental check-ups not only for treatment but as a preventive measure. Nurses, in particular, play an essential role in educating both parents and children about proper dental care and health practices.

Recent research underscores the profound influence parents have on their children's oral health behaviors. For instance, a study by Octavia et al (2023) illustrated that parents' active involvement in guiding their children on dental hygiene significantly reduces oral health issues. Similarly, (Banowati et al., 2021) found that health education interventions for parents



improved their roles in maintaining their children's oral health, showing measurable changes in behavior and attitudes towards dental hygiene. These findings align with previous work by (Izzah & Hindriyastuti, 2020), who highlighted the importance of parental awareness and education in preventing dental problems in children, stressing that parental involvement is pivotal in maintaining oral health routines, especially in early childhood.

Dental caries is a major cause of chronic disease in school-aged children, this tooth decay is caused by bacterial activity in plaque and conditions where teeth are gradually damaged if not treated properly will cause various adverse effects such as pain, swelling difficult to chew and porous even dental caries problems can increase the risk of death from coronary heart disease by 32% and developmental disorders in children including a 50% decrease in intelligence (Liu et al., 2022).

According to the *World Health Organization* (WHO) (2020) 3.48 billion people in the world experience oral disease, tooth and mouth damage is also experienced by 3.5 billion people with 486 million children aged 4-14 years experiencing dental caries and becoming a major problem. In Indonesia, the prevalence of dental health problems is 80-90% of children aged 3-4 years 81.1%, aged 5-9 years 92.6% and aged 10-14 73.4% (Riskasdes 2018). The prevalence in West Java of dental caries was 45.7%, cavities 30.67%, loose teeth 18.48 and thrush 0.07% in children (West Java Provincial Government, 2022). Oral health issues in children have long been a neglected concern, yet they are fundamental to overall health and well-being. The situation is particularly critical in school-age children, who often lack sufficient care and preventive education, resulting in severe oral health consequences. This issue has become increasingly prevalent, with statistics showing that the incidence of dental caries and other oral health problems among children is alarmingly high. In a survey conducted by the Sukabumi District Health Office in 2023, 6,800 elementary school children were reported to have experienced oral health issues. Specifically, 75.4% of children aged 4-14 in Sukabumi had dental damage, including cavities. A detailed analysis from the Nagrak Health Center highlighted that 35.6% of students had cavities, 17.4% had dirty teeth, 5.37% were missing teeth, and 33.3% of students were suffering from dental caries (Sukabumi District Health Office, 2023).

The problem of poor oral health in children in Sukabumi has been a growing concern for several years, which led researchers to examine the root causes in greater depth. A preliminary study conducted by the researchers on September 28, 2024, further reinforced this issue. During a health screening at 27 elementary schools within the Nagrak Health Center area in August 2023, dental health data was reviewed. This review revealed a concerning trend: SDN Jelegong and SDN Gudang schools had the highest rates of dental caries among their students compared to others in the region. Specifically, 11.5% of students at SDN Jelegong and 10.8% of students at SDN Gudang were diagnosed with dental caries, indicating an urgent need for targeted intervention.

This chronology highlights the escalating problem of dental caries in the region, underlining the importance of examining parental roles in oral health care. The data paints a clear picture of the widespread nature of the problem and the critical need for preventive measures and education. This study is motivated by the observed trend in these schools, and the researchers are driven to explore the specific roles parents play in mitigating these issues, as effective parental involvement has been shown to play a pivotal role in improving children's oral health behaviors.

Previous research conducted by Novitasari, et al (2023) analyzed the role of parents in children's dental and oral hygiene at Sultan Agung 02 Semarang Kindergarten. The study found that children have a strong preference for sweet foods, which leads to an increased risk of



cavities and dental caries. The research concluded that parents play a crucial role in maintaining their children's dental and oral hygiene from an early age. It emphasized that parents are the first educators and the primary influence on their children's health habits, underscoring their importance in preventing oral health problems.

Researchers try to describe in depth the role of parents in caring for children's oral health at Jelegong Elementary School using qualitative research methods with a phenomenological approach. As a proper care effort for children to keep their teeth healthy and treatment efforts if children already have carious teeth so that they do not get worse.

Methods

This research design is a qualitative method that assesses phenomena experienced consciously by participants with a phenomenological approach. These phenomena cannot be defined, measured, and summarized numerically. Phenomenological research explores meaning through words conveyed to researchers (Rofiah et al., 2023). In this study, namely the description of the role of parents in caring for children's oral health in terms of awareness, education, work, time and parental concern for children at Jelegong Elementary School. Participants are parents of fathers and mothers who have children attending Jelegong Elementary School. The sampling method (*purposeful* sampling) sampling procedure depends on the research objectives by determining the number of samples until saturation is reached. Saturation is saturation or similarity of answers from participants (Pragholapati et al., 2020). Based on the results of the study, the number of samples taken was 6 participants. The final limit of the sample size is the achievement of saturation in its participants.

The data collection techniques used are interviews, observation, and documentation. According to (Assyakurrohim et al., 2022) There are important procedures in carrying out phenomenological studies as a result of adaptation of Creswell's thoughts as follows: Reading all interview transcripts and field notes, understanding the meaning of all interview transcripts and comparing with field notes, re-reading interview transcripts and field notes, identifying keywords researchers underline related words, grouping underlined words into categories, grouping the categories obtained into sub themes, grouping sub-themes into themes, returning to participants to validate the results of the analysis of the themes that the researcher determines, combining the validated data into a complete description by combining the validation results of each participant into one complete description of the phenomenon study of the role of parents in caring for children's oral health at Jelegong Elementary School.

Results

A. Theme Overview

The research data were obtained through in-depth interviews and field notes, then analyzed based on the analysis model from Creswell (Assyakurrohim et al., 2022). Based on the analysis that the researchers conducted, 3 themes and 7 sub-themes were obtained.

1. The Role of Parents in Caring for Children's Dental and Oral Health at Jelegong Elementary School

The role of parents is to guide, maintain hygiene as well as children's health. 1 theme and 3 sub. This is presented as follows:

Theme 1: Teaching Children Dental and Oral Care

The habituation factor carried out by parents is seen in some participants who understand and some do not understand teaching children to brush their teeth as a time routine in caring for oral health that must be done every.

Sub-theme 2: Facilitating Dental and Health Checks



Visits to the dentist or to the health center should be done every six months. This is done so that the child gets an examination because usually when children only go to the dentist when there are complaints. Parental awareness regarding visits for dental examinations to the dentist needs to be instilled.

Subtheme 3: Dental and Care Education Communication Strategy

Participants have provided educational communication strategies to their children in different ways.

Table 1.

Code	Mother/Dad			Child	
	Age Mother/Father	Education Mother/Father	Occupation Mother/Father	Age	Gender
P1	30 yrs	Junior High School	laborer Factory	7 yrs	Female
P2	38 yrs	elementary school	laborer Factory	7 yrs	Male
P3	32 yrs	Junior High School	Trader	7,6 yrs	Male
P4	31 yrs	Junior High School	laborer Factory	7 yrs	Female
P5	40 yrs	elementary school	laborer	8 yrs	Female
P6	31 yrs	Junior High School	Trader	7 yrs	Female

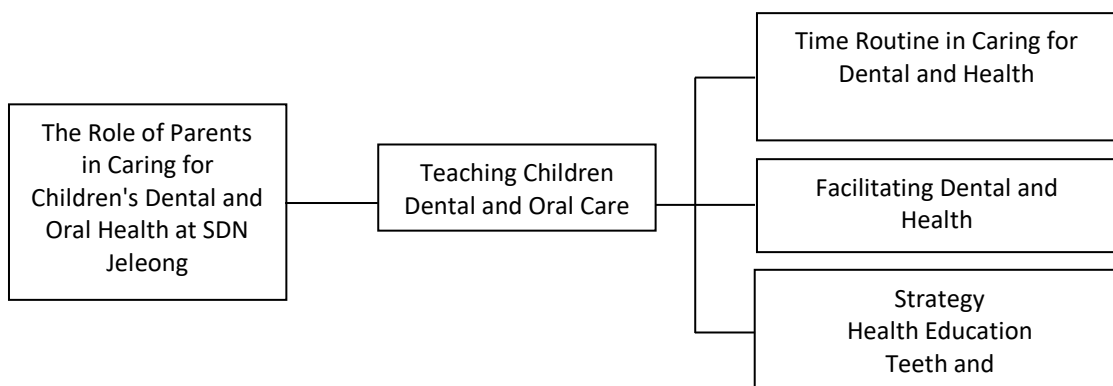


Figure 1. The Role of Parents in Caring for Children's Dental Health and Mulu t at SDN Jelegong

2. Oral Health Condition of Children at SDN Jelegong

Oral health as an important factor that must be maintained and known, this is because the condition of healthy or sick teeth can affect the function of other organs such as digestion there are 1 theme and 2 sub themes. This is presented as follows:

Sub-theme 1: Perception of Healthy Teeth

The perceptual form of interview results from participants 1 to 6 already have knowledge about caring for healthy dental health.

Sub-theme 2: Perception of Carious Tooth Condition

Forms of understanding related to the perception of carious teeth. Based on the results of interviews from participants 1 to 6 already know about carious teeth.



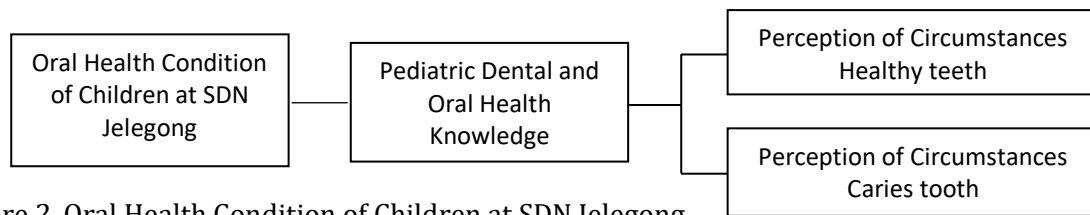


Figure 2. Oral Health Condition of Children at SDN Jelegong

3. Factors Affecting the Role in Caring for Children's Dental and Oral Health at Jelegong Elementary School

The obstacle factors for parents in caring for children's oral health were carried out in 1 theme and 2 sub-themes. This is presented as follows:

Theme 7: Obstacles in Caring for Children's Dental and Oral Health

Sub-theme 1: Busy

Based on the narrative of participants 1 to 6, some of the obstacles and causal factors are the level of understanding, work, namely as factory employees, traders and laborers, awareness and there is also from participant 2 mentioning that only two people live with children because of divorce and participants work so that their children are entrusted to relatives and then consider it less important.

Sub-theme 2: The Difficulty of Managing Time

Based on the statements of participants 1 to 6, several factors hinder the difficulty of managing time in caring for children's oral health due to many factors.

B. Discussion

The researcher will compare the results of the study with the concepts and related research described in the previous chapter. The discussion will be detailed in accordance with the research objectives through themes and sub-themes obtained from participants' expressions and also discuss the limitations of the research by comparing the ideal conditions and the field that researchers face.

C. Interpretation of Results and Gap Analysis

Interpretation of the results and gap analysis were conducted based on the themes formed for each of the specific objectives of this study. The discussion of these themes is as follows:

1. The Role of Parents in Caring for Children's Dental and Oral Health at SDN

The active role of parents is needed in directing, teaching, guiding, and providing facilities for children to maintain dental health. The roles of parents identified in this study are:

Theme 1: Teaching Children Dental and Oral Care

Sub-theme 1: Time Routine in Caring for Dental and Health

This study identified 7 categories: Teaching brushing teeth, morning and evening, at least twice a day, brushing teeth three times a day, using flavored toothpaste, not eating a lot of sweets and eating healthy food. The categories of sub-theme 1 above are in accordance with related concepts and research, namely: the role of parents on dental care behavior by cleaning teeth, teaching good toothpaste administration, teaching how to brush teeth properly and avoiding consumption of foods high in sugar (Sutomo et al., 2020). Getting used to brushing teeth every morning and evening shower, accustoming children to reduce sweet foods and getting used to brushing teeth by choosing toothpaste (Nugraheni et al., 2019) This study explains that some participants understand and do not understand in caring for oral health.

Sub-theme 2: Facilitating Dental and Oral Health Check-ups



This study identified 6 categories, namely: puskesmas or posyandu, dentist, self-treatment, medicine stall, revoked and temporarily left. The categories of sub-theme 2 above are in accordance with related concepts and research, namely: the role of parents to check with the dentist every 6 months for preventive measures for tooth decay and if there is pain in the teeth, it can be treated with pharmacological and non-pharmacological therapies (Putri et al., 2024) . Getting information or examinations about oral health at posyandu but rarely held and the factor of busyness from parents, only giving their own medicines and inviting children to check their teeth to a dentist for tooth extraction (Theresia et al., 2022) . This study explains that there are several respondents that lack of parental awareness about checking to the dentist and some respondents use professionals.

Sub-theme 3: Educational Communication Strategy for Dental and Care

This study identified 6 categories, namely: attention slowly, scolded, reprimanded, given understanding, children's version of the video and videos or pictures of how to clean teeth. The categories of sub-theme 3 above are in accordance with related concepts and research, namely: The role of parents in communicating with children in caring for oral health (Wicaksono et al., 2022) . Provide understanding by giving understanding slowly, for example with small talk when playing or before bed, showing videos and pictures of children's versions of, less communication integration and less attention, this is explained when children consume sweet foods such as chocolate or candy, parents will reprimand directly and even scold in a high tone, tend to underestimate and pay less attention to dental problems in school-age children (Constantika et al., 2022) . This study explains that some respondents who have children in caring for oral health experience problems in communicating, but some respondents show attention to children in caring for their oral health.

2. State of Dental and Oral Health of Children at SDN Jelegong

Parental awareness affects attitudes and actions in maintaining and caring for dental health in school children. This is in accordance with the discussion examined in this study, namely:

Theme 2: Children's oral health knowledge

Sub-theme 4: Perceived state of dental health

This research identification produces 8 categories, namely: no cavities, brush your teeth properly, neat, white color, brush your teeth twice, whole teeth, diligently brush your teeth, get used to brushing your teeth. The categories of theme 2 above are in accordance with related concepts and research, namely: healthy teeth condition slightly yellowish white color, pink gums, wet tongue, no cavities, and no pain when eating. Parents' awareness to understand children if problematic teeth cause toothache or pain so that children's activities can be disrupted, the level of understanding is said to be a little understanding in terms of the characteristics of healthy teeth (Widya, 2023) . This study explains that respondents have knowledge about what healthy teeth are like.

Sub-theme 5: Perception of Carious Tooth Condition

This research identification resulted in 6 categories namely: hole, porous, not intact, yellow in front, toothache, not strong enough to bite, messy. The categories of theme 5 above are in accordance with related concepts and research, namely: Dental caries is dental tissue caused by acids contained in carbohydrates through the intermediary of microorganisms in saliva (Nuriyah et al., 2022) . This study explains that respondents with a sufficient form of understanding in terms of the characteristics of carious teeth.

3. Constraining Factors Affecting the Role in Caring for Children's Dental and Oral Health at Jelegong Primary School



Theme 3: Constraints in Caring for Children's Oral Health

Sub-theme 6: Level

This research identified 8 categories, namely: tired from work, sometimes busy selling, labor work, reprimanded or scolded, lack of attention, considered less important, difficulties and busy selling at the market. The categories from theme 6 above are in accordance with related concepts and research, namely: the level of understanding of parents will have an impact on the way parents think in educating them. Parents with a good level of education will pay attention to children according to their age and development (Mahirawatie et al., 2021) . This study explains that some respondents consider oral health less important, and pay less attention and lack of awareness to care for oral health due to factors from busy work.

Sub-theme 7: The Difficulty of Managing Time

This research identified 6 categories, namely: morning rush, difficult to find time, busy often work, limited time, not easy to manage time, sometimes feel difficulties. The categories of theme 7 above are in accordance with related concepts and research, namely: closely related to time constraints, excessive task load, lack of understanding of the importance of regular dental care habits. Therefore, the solution to this problem requires an approach that involves increasing parents' understanding of the importance of dental care, better time management , as well as creating fun habits (Umairahmah et al., 2024) . This study explains that respondents have limited time in various ways.

Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the description of the role of parents in caring for children's oral health at Jelegong Elementary School is:

1. Time routines in caring for oral health carried out by parents to children in caring for oral health in the form of habituation carried out by several respondents are well conditioned, such as teaching brushing teeth properly and correctly, avoiding sweet foods, giving toothpaste, and eating healthy foods. there is an understanding of parents in caring for children's oral health, but there are two participants who pay less attention and consider things not so important.
2. Oral health check-up facilities included visits for examination and treatment to the dentist or to the health center; understanding of medication administration and parental concern. Two respondents lacked awareness about dental check-ups and the other respondent used professionals to deal with it.
3. Educational communication strategies in caring for oral and dental health establish good communication and intents with children by giving understanding of simple words and slowly not by scolding and using video media or children's version of pictures about teeth and mouth and some respondents have obstacles in communication with children, namely by scolding and reprimanding.
4. Perception of the state of healthy teeth all respondents have knowledge about healthy teeth such as the color of the teeth is not yellow, there is no porous and neat holes, the teeth are intact and do not feel pain when chewing food.
5. Perception of the state of caries teeth, all respondents know caries teeth in terms of the characteristics of caries teeth, namely that there are cavities, porous teeth, yellow in the front, not strong when biting and often feel pain in the teeth.
6. Busy working, the obstacle factors felt by respondents in caring for children's oral health are the type of work, awareness and experience possessed by parents. This obstacle occurs because it considers less important in caring for oral health which



results in less implementation in accordance with the understanding that has been owned.

7. The difficulty in managing time is a constraint factor felt by respondents who have limited time in various ways such as: morning rush, difficult to find time, busy often working, limited time, not easy to manage time, sometimes feel difficulties.

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